

AMENDMENTS TO THE DISCLOSURE

Agent for Applicant respectfully request the following amendments to the disclosure without adding any new subject matter, namely:

Page 6, line 13

The floor panel 2 comprises a base 6 an inner panel or floor covering 8 and an outer panel or floor covering.

Agent for Applicant encloses herewith a clean copy of the amendment for entry.

35 USC § 112

Examiner stated that claims 10-12 were rejected as being indefinite and in particular stated that claim 10 recites the limitation "said first and second panels" and that only inner and outer panels have been introduced thus far.

Kindly note that the claims have been amended so as to more fully particularize that the outer panels are inner and outer floor coverings.

35 USC § 102

Examiner stated that claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) as being anticipated by Gibson. In particular Examiner stated that Gibson disclosed a floor panel 10 including a base 13 and an inner I and outer O panels adhesively bonded thereto.

In this regard Agent for Applicant respectfully states that the base is:

generally stamped from sheet steel or metal from two pieces of metal and spot welded together in a manner well known to those persons skilled in the art. The base 6 may be hollow or filled with concrete again in a

manner well known to those persons skilled in the art (see page 6, lines 14-17)

In particular by looking at Figure 3 of applicant's invention one can see that the panel comprises an upper base structure 6 and a lower base structure 6 which is hollow in between.

Accordingly agent for applicant respectfully states Examiner's characterization of Gibson showing an inner panel I and outer panel O has now been clarified with the amendments particularized herein. In other words, Examiner's characterization of inner panel I is really the upper surface of the base structure 13.

Gibson confirms such characterization in that Gibson teaches:

each of the panels provides a decorative upper surface 12 which is laminated to a panel base 13. In the illustrated embodiment, the floor covering 12 is formed of a high pressure laminate and the panel base is formed of sheet metal. It should be understood that the present invention may be applied to other types of panel bases, and that the present invention is not limited to metal panel bases per se (see col. 2, lines 45-53).

Furthermore Gibson refers to (see col. 1, line 39) the prior art U.S. Patent 3,548,559. In this regard U.S. Patent No. 3,548,559 teaches:

the panel is shown to have three structural elements that are sandwiched together to lend strength and integrity to the panel. The bottom or lower sheet 2 is formed as a pan with side flanges 8 bent upwardly. A solid core 4 applied with, composite board or other compression-resistant material of a thickness designed for the intended load is glued or otherwise adhered to the inside bottom of the sheet 2 and a flat upper sheet 6 is adhered to the top of the core. Upper and lower sheets 2 and 6 are preferably metal such as steel and usually 20 or 40 mils thick depending on the strength needed (see col. 1, lines 56-67)

In other words the base structure is generally comprised of two pieces having an upper and lower base.

Applicant has in the amendments referred to the base structure.

Furthermore Gibson teaches:

In accordance with the present invention, a single piece of floor covering 12 is adhesively bonded to the body 13 (see col. 3, lines 18-20).

Applicant on the other hand teaches:

1. a base structure;
2. an inner floor covering and an outer floor covering;
3. a floor panel having a base structure and an inner floor covering adhesively secured to the base structure and an outer floor covering adhesively secured to the inner floor covering where the inner floor covering extends beyond the outer floor covering so as to present a border along the edge of the inner floor covering;
4. the inner floor covering and the outer floor covering are separate.

In particular Applicant teaches two separate floor coverings which are adhesively bonded to one another and to the base structure.

35 USC § 103

Furthermore Examiner rejected claims 7-12 as being unpatentable over Gibson. In this regard, Examiner stated that Gibson discloses an elevated floor 10 including a base 13 and an inner I and outer O panels adhesively bonded thereto.

In this regard Agent for Applicant respectfully states that Gibson does not teach:

1. a base structure;
2. an inner floor cov ring and an outer floor cov ring;